

## **Kitchen Nightmares by Luddleston**

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**Summary:**

Shiro's a little bit accident-prone in the kitchen. So much so, his roommates sign him up for cooking lessons, and he's determined to finally learn how to cook without setting off any smoke alarms.

There's one problem: his instructor is gorgeous to the point of being distracting, and Shiro is definitely gonna set something on fire again.

## Kitchen Nightmares

### Author's Note:

Inspired by my long-held headcanon that Shiro can't cook, plus [this post](#)

Seriously, though, Shiro is a hot mess.

(For [shattsunday](#).)

Lance came home to find Keith staring at the stove, frowning. He stayed there for a long while, long enough that Lance took off his coat and shoes, set his backpack on the floor next to the couch, and Keith didn't so much as move.

"What'cha doing, babe?" Lance asked, and Keith jumped, like he'd been so deep in thought looking at—seriously, what the hell was it?—he'd completely missed Lance walking in the house.

"Oh. Lance, hey. Sorry, thought you might've been Shiro."

"And you nearly jumped out of your skin because...?"

"Because I'm not really sure how to talk to him about this," Keith said, picking up something out of Gordon Ramsay's nightmares.

It looked like a stove burner. And something that had been a cutting board before someone (Shiro) set it on the stove burner. The plastic was melted through, wedged firmly in the spiral burner, and in thick black sharpie, there was a note on the un-melted section that simply read "SORRY," followed by a frowny face.

"How the *hell* did he do that?" Lance asked, because really, this was taking Shiro's kitchen, uh, incidents to a whole new level. The time he caught the pasta on fire had really been Lance's fault for lighting the gas burner right next to the pasta pot, and, okay, the time he tried to cook a frozen pizza

directly on the oven rack had been kind of stupid, because how would you *not* know that would melt directly through? The mug cake thing... well. Mug cakes never turned out well, but, Lance found, they were especially bad when you forgot how long the microwave had been on.

"Listen, if I didn't know what your handwriting looks like, I would've thought this was you, so. You can't judge," Keith said.

"I absolutely can," Lance replied, "because I would've noticed as soon as I smelled it." The room still kinda had the scent of melted plastic, come to think of it. "Some scorch marks on the cutting board, nothing more."

"Okay, but he can't..."

The door opened again, cutting Keith off before he reminded Lance that Shiro's sense of smell had been a little off since getting that huge scar across his nose. Made him snore like a lawnmower with a rock stuck in it, too.

"Oh. You found that," Shiro said, immediately noticing the cutting board in Keith's hand. "Sorry. I'll call the landlord to get it fixed."

"It's cool, man," Lance said, "just. How, dude. How have you not managed to destroy everything you've cooked in, uh, ever."

"I mean, I was never good at it," Shiro said, shrugging out of his jacket and hanging it up in the closet by the front door instead of slinging it over the back of the couch like Lance did. "When I got back, I kind of got... worse. I set the cutting board down because I just, I just put my hand over the burner to see if it was hot, and I didn't notice... I mean, I used my right hand."

Oh, yeah, the hand that was made of metal and therefore couldn't feel temperature.

"Hey, at least it means you've got a damn good prosthetic?" Lance said, ever the optimist.

"I guess so."

"Well, I'm gonna cook dinner tonight," Keith said, blunt as usual, already opening the fridge.

Shiro just laughed. "Alright, that sounds great. Be right back."

He disappeared into his bedroom, and Lance leaned against the kitchen counter, watching Keith double-check the expiration date on the almond milk. "So, Keith," he said, getting the kind of mild hum in response that said Keith was sparing him whatever part of his focus he could. "Good news is: I think I know what to get Shiro for Christmas."

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"You guys... signed me up for cooking lessons?" Shiro asked, flipping through the brochure detailing exactly what he was in for.

"Was that maybe not a good idea?" Lance said, fiddling with the end of the over-long Santa hat he was wearing.

"No, no, it's actually, uh, probably smart." Earlier this week, Keith had asked him to keep an eye on the cookies he had in the oven, and so half of their Christmas cookies were a little... well-done. Shiro could probably use some cooking know-how.

"They're on Wednesday nights," Keith said, "since you don't work then."

Shiro smoothed the brochure shut with a fond smile and got up to hug the both of them. "It's honestly a great present," he said, "I'm looking forward to 'em."

He *had* been saying he needed to get out of the house more.

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Lance and Keith had signed Shiro up for a four-session culinary basics workshop, and the website for the facility said little more than that and the instructor's name, which was listed as "Matt H." He didn't know what

exactly they'd be doing, which made him a little anxious as he walked in the door, kicking snow off his boots to get them as dry as he could before stepping into the lobby.

Shiro realized a few things quickly about cooking lessons: one, it was apparently a couples' event. His class was composed of him, a trio of girls who all seemed to be friends, and two couples, both of whom had nudged the barstools they were seated at closer to each other than they really needed to be. It was fine, Shiro thought, because it gave him a little more space at the long butcher-block table in the middle of the room, which featured a stovetop and a sink set into it for demonstrations. It looked like a pretty fancy establishment, with a fully stocked pantry and one of those refrigerators with clear doors so you could see the contents. Lance assured him that the classes came at a discount, though, because one of his friends was related to the instructor. At least Shiro didn't have to worry about them spending a lot on him.

Two of the three BFFs at the other end of the table were looking at him, which Shiro was used to, because he didn't bother dyeing his hair, and he couldn't exactly hide the prosthetic arm. He dropped his hand into his lap and pretended not to notice, and, once the instructor walked in, he stopped caring entirely.

"Hey, sorry I'm late, snow's really coming down," he shouted over a stack of boxes he carried into the classroom, tall enough to obscure his face. He set them down on the table with a clatter and ducked around them, breathing a sigh of relief now that he'd gotten rid of his burden. "Nice to meet you all! I'm Matt, I'll be your instructor for the next couple weeks," he said, and that was all Shiro heard, because the rest of his introduction was drowned out by Shiro's blood rushing in his ears, along with the kind of mental sirens that tended to click on when he was faced with a very attractive man.

And he was. Attractive, that is. Matt was a little shorter than him, from the looks of things, and he was slim, carried himself well, with the kind of energy that said he was comfortable in this space. He wore round glasses that complimented the sharp angles of his chin and his nose, and his hair

was tied in a ponytail at the back of his neck, but there were a few strands escaping at his nape that Shiro noticed as he turned.

That was about when Matt finished up with his introduction, ending with an, "everybody got that?" that Shiro nodded along to, stupidly, because he did not, in fact, get any of that.

He gathered, though, from what everybody else was up to, that they were practicing knife work for their first day, which made sense. It seemed to be important to know how to prepare things before you cooked them, and honestly, Shiro was just glad to be working with something he couldn't burn. Everybody got a little selection of vegetables that they were supposed to cut according to the instructions Shiro had missed, because he was busy noticing that Matt's eyes were a particularly gorgeous shade of amber.

How hard could it really be, though?

Apparently, it could be a little harder than Shiro assumed, because Matt appeared at his side after not five minutes, leaning in close and making him jump enough that it must've been obvious.

"Whoa there, Wolverine," Matt said, "there's like, a technique to this. It's not just hack-and-slash, yeah?"

From the sounds of things, Matt was a big 'ol nerd, too, and Shiro wished he was the kind of person who wasn't attracted to that. "Oh, uh. Sorry."

"S no big deal, you're practicing," Matt said, snatching a couple of the slices of carrot Shiro had on his cutting board, which he'd cut into a completely different shape from everyone else's. "So, you do it like this, and these guys are completely different sizes," he said, and yeah, one of them was distinctly bigger than the other. "Gonna mess up your cooking times."

"Huh. Yeah, probably," Shiro said, because he hadn't really thought about that. He usually stuck vegetables in a blender. Smoothies were great, okay?

"Mm-hm. Just slow down," Matt hummed, patting him on the wrist, and Shiro hoped nobody noticed how red he was getting. "It's not a race, dude. I

mean, you've gotta finish before the end of class, but. I think you've got it."

"Sure, I'll, uh, keep that in mind." Was that a normal thing to say? Shiro couldn't remember.

"Yeah, plus, this way you won't make me worry you're gonna slice your finger off."

"Don't worry about that," Shiro said, waving his prosthetic hand, "I think I'm safe."

Matt regarded Shiro's right arm with a kind of intrigue he didn't normally garner. "That thing's awesome," he said, almost... breathless. Weird. Shiro wasn't sure if he should be flattered or offended. "Uh, sorry. I'm studying biology, concentration in biotechnology, so that's kind of... my thing."

"Oh. That's really cool," Shiro said, and Matt laughed it off with a shrug.

"It's really not. It just means I'm a nerd." He took a step back. "Anyway, I'll let you get back to it."

Shiro didn't get a chance to tell him that he was kind of into that, and decided he should probably be glad, considering hitting on a guy you had to spend the next five weeks learning cooking techniques from could be a disaster.

When Matt came back over and patted him on the shoulder cheerfully for not mangling any more vegetables and Shiro's heart started to race for what had to be the fifth time that night, he thought maybe it was gonna be a disaster, anyway.

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"How was your cooking class?" Lance asked as soon as Shiro stepped through the door. Keith didn't acknowledge him, because Keith was fast asleep with his head in Lance's lap.

"It was... interesting," Shiro said, shrugging out of his coat. "We made this stir fry thing." His had actually been pretty successful. Sure, he'd gotten the

seasoning a little off, and some of the vegetables were a little burnt because he hadn't stirred it enough—entirely Matt's fault, he rolled the sleeves of his flannel past his elbows and Shiro didn't know *why* it was so hot, but it was, and he'd been frozen for a few minutes too long.

"Cool," Lance said, absentmindedly petting Keith's hair, "did you set their kitchen on fire?"

"Lance, that was one time."

Lance laughed, and it must've woken Keith, because he stirred, made a disgruntled sound, and tugged the blanket further up over his head until all that stuck out was his messy hair. "Good experience overall, then?" Lance asked, and Shiro nodded.

"Yeah. The instructor's, um." Gorgeous? Adorable? The kind of guy who looks like he has really soft hair that probably smells nice? "He's pretty good."

Lance must've noticed him blushing, because Shiro caught a grin creeping over his face. He resolutely turned around and shoved his coat in the closet, but when he turned around, Lance still looked like the Cheshire Cat.

"Pretty good, huh?"

Yeah. Pretty good.

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Shiro's next cooking lesson caught him on a particularly busy day—he'd stayed late at work and had to rush home to change. "You could've gone straight there," Keith had said. Shiro maintained that he didn't have to look like he just came from the gym everywhere he went just because he worked at one.

Keith and Lance were making dinner as Shiro bustled around, almost forgetting his keys twice. They were mostly arguing over cooking times and Lance was trying to smack Keith's butt with a spatula.



"I'm heading out!" Shiro called, yanking his shoes on.

"Yeah, cool," Keith said, attempting to wrestle the spatula out of Lance's grip.

"Have fun!" Lance cheered, and Shiro waved at him as he made his way to the door. "Oh, and Shiro!"

"What?"

"So, like, is there a reason you're wearing that one shirt that's a little bit too tight on you, or...?"

Keith, who'd gotten the spatula back, whapped Lance on the back of the head with it.

"It was—I—*it was the only one I had clean, okay?*"

"Suuuuure."

— — —

When Matt arrived home from work, he walked through the door (as usual) cursing about the snow. His sister ignored him as he stomped it off his boots, and continued to do so when he accidentally stepped in a wet patch left by whatever snowfall had drifted off his scarf and onto the floor and (as usual) screeched about it.

Matt didn't like the winter all that much.

"You done?" Pidge asked, looking up from the textbooks she had spread out across the kitchen table. Her new semester had just started, and Matt was proud of her dedication to her coursework even this early on. He typically didn't start paying attention to classes until he remembered he had a midterm in a week.

"I think so. It's negative eight degrees out there, Pidge. Negative. Eight. Okay, maybe I wasn't done."

"You'd be warmer if you didn't wear that shirt," Pidge said, which was true, because the sweater he had on was pretty thin, but it was also a really nice shade of blue that brought out his eyes, according to, well, according to his mom.

Point being, he looked damn good in it. "Excuse me for dressing up for once," he said, setting their kettle on the stove, because a cup of tea was definitely in order, if just to get the warmth back into his insides.

"Oh, so you're *not* showing off for the cute guy in the class you're teaching?" Pidge gave him a smug look over the top of her glasses.

"I never should have told you that."

"Hey, it's not my fault you can't stop gushing about this dude," Pidge said, and then pitched her voice into what Matt assumed was supposed to be an imitation of him, "he has such cute hair and pretty eyes and a nice butt and I'm a gay disaster who doesn't know what to do about it."

Matt huffed, affronted, and reached to pull the kettle off the burner as it started to whistle. "I don't sound that nasally, Pidge, get your impressions straight!" The gay disaster part was pretty spot-on, though.

"You absolutely do."

"Well, what am I supposed to do about it, anyway?" Matt asked, dropping a tea bag into his favorite mug. "It's not like I can ask him out, I'm at *work*. That's inappropriate. He could be straight and, and married, for all I know!" He took a seat at the table next to Pidge as he waited for his tea to steep, and she looked back at her notes, clearly done with Matt's crisis.

"I mean, does he wear a wedding ring?"

"Oh. No. Guess I can rule that one out. He could still be, like, engaged or something. Or straight!"

Pidge snatched his mug and stole a drink of his tea, and Matt got to watch karma in action as she burned her tongue on it. "Shit! Matt, oh my god. Just

ask him out after the class, you know, when you're off the clock."

"I don't think I could handle the rejection. I'm serious, this guy is like, a model, I think. His jawbone could cut glass."

"Cool, compare him to a power tool, that's peak romance."

Matt sighed, standing so he could drop off the used tea bag in the trash can. "You're so unhelpful," he said, "all I'm trying to do is have a lot of feelings about a boy in peace, and you're up in here criticizing my poetic longing, or whatever."

"Yep. It's my duty as your sister." She shut one of the books and adjusted her glasses as she gave him a look. A look that said *Matthew, I am done with your bullshit*. "Listen. Just be chill and make friends with him. If you keep up talking with him after the class ends, you can ask him out and it won't be weird or anything. Yeah?"

"Oh my god, Pidgeon, you might actually be on to something."

Who ever thought he'd ever be getting solid dating advice from his little sister?

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Lance may have joked about it, but really, there was only so much time before Shiro caught something on fire.

He was, in general, bad at estimating what heat just about anything should be on, and by the time he actually smelled smoke, something was usually already in flames. If he could focus on what he was doing, he was less likely to leave something unattended long enough for it to ignite, but Matt was wearing skinny jeans.

And Shiro could not focus on a damn thing.

Matt usually wore khakis to class, which may have been professional but only served to make him look more like a dork, and it was cute, but Shiro

had never had to mentally tell himself not to look at a guy's ass so many times in a row.

Shiro belatedly found himself wishing he'd decided to look at his station while trying resolutely not to stare at Matt's legs, but instead, he looked at Matt's face while he chatted with one of the couples who attended lessons. This may not have been the best week for them to fry up a bunch of things, because there was a lot of oil and Shiro was not paying attention to how long he'd had the piece of fish cooking on the pan.

A couple of the girls at the station next to his started screaming when the flames licked up the sides of the frying pan and Shiro yelped, reaching around himself to untie his apron, because he'd experienced enough grease fires to know not to stick the pan in the sink.

The fire was successfully smothered before Matt even reached him with the extinguisher, but he looked alarmed enough that Shiro checked behind himself to make sure the pan wasn't still aflame.

"Jesus. Fucking. *Christ*," Matt said, his professional demeanor and his voice both breaking as he reached behind Shiro to flick on the fan on the stove hood so the fire alarm wouldn't go off. "Are you okay? What the hell!"

"I'm fine," Shiro said, "seriously, I'm fine. I... just got distracted."

"Well. Please try not to do that again," Matt said, still looking warily at him, like if he took his eyes off Shiro, something would burst into flames again.

The rest of the class went back to the project at hand one by one, trying not to make the same mistake as Shiro, but Matt stayed at Shiro's station, helping him clean up. "I'm so sorry," Shiro said, his face bright red, and not even because he was looking at Matt this time. "I... I wanna say I'm not usually that much of a disaster in the kitchen, but..."

"It's fine," Matt said, "might be the first time someone's lit something on fire in one of my classes, but you handled it well, at least. Something tells me it's not the first time it's happened to you."

Shiro cringed, both at the memories and the scent of burnt oil and fish that finally hit him as he started washing the pan. "Yeah. It's, um. Maybe happened before."

Matt smiled at him and nudged his shoulder against Shiro's. "We'll just have to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Shiro shut off the faucet and left the pan in the sink—it was still looking a little worse for wear, but the dishwasher would take care of it.

"Are you doing alright?" Matt asked, seemingly out of nowhere.

"Uh, yeah. I'm fine?"

"I'm just saying, people don't usually get that distracted unless there's something going on," Matt said, "just wanted to make sure everything was alright."

Something was not alright, and it was the fluttering in his heart Shiro was trying to clamp down on when Matt looked at him, expression soft and concerned. "No, it's. I'm fine."

Matt didn't look entirely convinced, but it wasn't like there was anything more Shiro could say. *"I'm distracted because you're beautiful and I'm having fantasies of asking you to come over to my place for dinner but that would require both for me to be a better cook and for me to be a better romantic."* Yeah, that was out.

"I'm fine," he repeated, to the same response.

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Matt was going to get to the bottom of this. He'd been teaching cooking classes since undergrad, and he had to say, he was a pretty damn good instructor by now. Sure, people sometimes messed things up, but this was a goddamn *beginner's class*, and Matt had no clue how Shiro could be getting objectively worse at cooking the more Matt taught him. The first class, Shiro had been relatively okay, but he'd been making more and more

mistakes up until today, when he screwed up the seasonings so bad he created something spicy enough that Pidge wouldn't have even tried it on a dare.

Matt could still taste it, and he regretted trying it just to reassure Shiro that he hadn't done that poorly. Turns out, he had.

This was ridiculous.

Shiro may have been attractive, but Matt liked to fancy himself the kind of person who wouldn't be so indulgent as to ignore the mistakes of an attractive student of his, especially not when said student was going around setting things on fire. That was just a hazard, and Matt had to figure out what was wrong.

He caught Shiro after class, just as he was wrapping himself up in his coat, and cleared his throat by way of a conversation starter. Not a great one, but whatever. "Hey, can I talk to you for a sec?"

Shiro paused, fingers fumbling on the violet scarf he was working on tying. "Oh. Yeah! Sure," he said, "what's going on?"

Matt leaned against the butcher-block table in the center of the room, because this was gonna take a minute. Shiro took a step further into the room, even though he still looked like he was imagining running right out the door.

"It's about your... well, your performance in this class," Matt said, because that was how he'd rehearsed saying it in the car on the way there.

"My... oh." Shiro sighed. "Listen, Matt, I'm so sorry, I'm really not great at this."

"I just don't get it," Matt said, "you seem like you're learning stuff, but then you go and make stupid mistakes, and it's like you're not improving even a little, and so I wanna know what I'm doing wrong!"

"What *you're* doing wrong?" Shiro asked, unfolding his arms from in front of his chest, opening his posture. "Matt, you're not doing anything wrong."

"No, I must be—if I can't get you through something this simple, I mean, that's on me as a teacher."

Shiro gave him this soft, anxious smile, his eyebrows creasing in the center, almost like embarrassment. "No, it's not," he said, "I promise. I'm actually doing way better at home, I made dinner with my roommates the other day and it was really good, and I've actually been making things to take for lunch instead of sticking a cliff bar in my bag. I swear, you're a great teacher."

"Then what's your *deal!*?" Matt paused. "I mean. That was rude of me. What's the roadblock that's keeping you from doing well in class?"

"I just get distracted, that's all, I swear," Shiro said, hands up in his own defense.

"Okay, that's true," Matt said. "But what's distracting you? Is it the other people in the kitchen? Wait, no, you said the thing about cooking with your roommates... what's the issue? Just an unfamiliar setting, or what?"

Shiro's face was going red, the flush creeping down his neck, and he shoved his hands in his pockets. "It's. I'm sometimes distracted because. I'm—okay, I promise I don't mean this in a creepy way. But you distract me, sometimes. Because. Uh. I think you're cute."

Of all the things Matt would've predicted he'd say (maybe he was uncomfortable when the other people in the class looked at his arm like that, or maybe he didn't like having a teacher watching him) that wasn't anywhere close to on the list. "You think what," he said, cheeks burning, his face probably matching Shiro's now.

"I just. I find you attractive. I'm really sorry," Shiro said, "this is completely inappropriate, I shouldn't be—"

"Do you wanna go on a date?" The words were out of Matt's mouth before he realized he'd said them.

"Do I—? Yeah, I mean, yes, of course I want to... do *you* want to?"

Matt couldn't kid himself, it was sort of adorable to have a guy that intimidatingly handsome stumbling over his words around him. "Yeah, of course I do, that's why I asked."

"Oh. Yeah, duh. Alright, um... can I give you my number?" Shiro asked, and Matt nearly dropped his phone trying to get it out of his pocket.

"God, my sister isn't gonna believe this," Matt muttered, while Shiro typed.

"Hm?"

"I may have mentioned a really attractive student," Matt said, "once or twice. Or enough times to make her want to install a new speaker system that's too loud to hear me over."

Shiro smiled wide enough that both his cheeks dimpled. "I was thinking," he said, as he handed Matt's phone back, "we should probably wait on the date until after the class is over, right?"

Matt didn't know what exactly the rules were, there, probably because this didn't typically happen, but it seemed proper to wait. "I think so, yeah," he said, sending Shiro a text with his name, "how about next Friday?"

"Next Friday sounds great," Shiro said, that smile still firmly in place.

When Shiro left, Matt slowly closed the door behind him, and then leaned against it, because he wasn't quite sure his legs were gonna hold him up. How the *fuck* did that happen? Was he dreaming? He pinched his forearm. Ow. Not dreaming.

Seriously, though, how the fuck did that happen.

— — —



They were supposed to go out on Friday. Shiro had a restaurant picked out, one that would hopefully match Matt's culinary sensibilities, and he'd put some serious thought into what he was gonna wear, and then he went to his last cooking class on Wednesday and actually didn't screw anything up, and Matt's congratulatory arm around his shoulder made his stomach erupt in butterflies.

"Hey," Matt said, after class. "You wanna go out for drinks?"

Shiro was helpless to say anything but yes.

The bar they went to was mostly empty, because it was a Wednesday night and nobody was out drinking, but Shiro didn't mind. Matt nudged their chairs a little closer together, until his knee was pressed against Shiro's. Matt ordered a glass of wine with the kind of confidence that made Shiro ask for the same, and then, while they waited, Matt put his hand over Shiro's, thumb feeling out the shapes of Shiro's mechanical fingers like he was trying to memorize them. Shiro couldn't feel it, but somehow, it warmed him just as much as Matt holding his organic hand would've.

"Well, Pidge is glad she doesn't have to pick me up after work, too," Matt said, sliding his phone back into his pocket. They'd taken Shiro's car because Matt didn't have a ride, since Pidge needed the car for something. The plan had been for her to pick him up after he was done teaching, but he'd texted her and told her that she didn't need to worry about it.

"Yeah, I'll drop you off," Shiro said, because he couldn't quite go inviting Matt over to his place yet, could he?

They talked for hours, Matt about his coursework and his weird Australian landlord who may or may not wear a fake mustache constantly, Shiro about his job and his roommates and how he'd managed to make dinner for himself without any serious incidents.

"You were my worst student," Matt said, after a long time. Shiro had his right arm draped over the back of Matt's chair and his hand between them, Matt tracing over his knuckles the same way he had with the prosthetic, and yeah, being able to feel it was definitely better.

"I'd believe that," Shiro replied, "I'm kind of a mess in the kitchen."

"It's okay," Matt said, "you were also my favorite student. Okay, no, maybe that ninety-year-old lady who came with her granddaughter and kept sassing me about my hair takes that one."

Shiro laughed, leaning his head against Matt's so that his nose pressed against the spot just above Matt's ear. "Why would she sass you about your hair? I like your hair."

"I like yours too," Matt said, "even if you're going gray like, thirty years too early."

"Going white," Shiro corrected him, and Matt reached up to tug at the offending bit.

"Still very cute."

Matt leaned a little closer to him, and Shiro felt warmer inside than he could ever remember being. "I can't believe you feel the same way," he said, and it came out quieter than he'd expected, almost a whisper.

Matt snorted, and reached up to adjust his glasses. "Of course I'm into you," he said, "have you seen you? And your frustrated face is adorable, and you look pretty goddamn sexy putting out a grease fire, if you forget about the part where you *started* the fire, and you wear cute sweaters a lot and. Yeah. You're, you're charming."

"So are you," Shiro said, and he leaned in a bit more, and Matt leaned in a bit more, and Matt's nose bumped his just before their lips met. Matt squeezed his hand a little tighter as he kissed him, soft and a little unsure. Or maybe Shiro was the one who was a little unsure. He couldn't tell.

Matt pulled away for a second, smiling at him, and he looked like he was about to lean back in when their waitress approached the table, startling them out of the moment.

"I'm so sorry," she said, "I really didn't wanna interrupt, but. Uh. We're closing?"

Shiro glanced at his watch, which informed him it was nearly eleven. "Oh, god! I'm sorry, we didn't realize..."

"Holy shit, is that really the time?" Matt asked, staring at his phone like it was lying to him. Shiro shifted to retrieve his wallet from his back pocket and handed a few bills to the waitress, enough to cover their dinks and then some. "Shiro! Hey! I was gonna get the check." Once he looked up and realized what Shiro was doing, Matt smacked him on the arm, affronted, and Shiro didn't react, because that was the prosthetic, and he couldn't feel it.

"Get the next one, then," Shiro said, and Matt may have been rolling his eyes, but he was smiling, too.

"Yeah, okay, that was pretty smooth. Now, c'mon, before we get kicked out."

Matt took his hand and tugged him toward the door, and Shiro followed, trying to tie his scarf one-handed and not exactly succeeding. It was fine, though, because Matt did it for him once they got out the front door, anyway.

Matt was a little quieter on the way home, simply directing Shiro to his address. He didn't pick up whatever thread of their conversation they'd left off with, and he seemed almost nervous, although Shiro couldn't quite pick out why. The drive was short, anyway, so he didn't have much time to speculate on what Matt was thinking—which he probably shouldn't have been doing in the first place.

Shiro parked his car outside Matt's building, and Matt hesitated for a second before opening the door.

"Hey," he said, and Shiro leaned in closer, because he wasn't letting this boy go without a kiss goodnight.

"Hey."

"Do you wanna come upstairs and meet my cat?"

Shiro just stared for a second, thrown off-guard by the sudden request.  
"...sure?"

"If you don't wanna come in, that's no big deal," Matt said hurriedly, "I mean, it's just our first date, but I was kinda having fun hanging out with you and I wanted to, you know, keep doing that."

"Oh! No, I wasn't... I was just trying to figure out if meeting your cat was a weird euphemism or something," Shiro said, undoing his seatbelt.

Matt laughed so hard he snorted. "No! I have an actual cat! Her name's Green."

Shiro was imagining a bright green cat, and honestly, he wouldn't put it past Matt, who'd told him earlier that he not only believed in aliens, he had a detailed timeline predicting when humans would finally discover evidence of alien activity. It was really interesting, if a little weird.

Matt opened the front door, and Shiro kissed him as soon as they were inside, and this time, he kept going, long enough for Matt to sink into his arms, completely relaxed against him. Shiro didn't stop, not until he felt something bump against his leg, and looked down to find a small, round cat headbutting him. Huh. Matt wasn't kidding.

— — —

Shiro woke the next morning in Matt's bed. Both of them were still dressed, because there was no way Shiro moved that fast on a first date, but Matt's hair was sticking up in enough places that an onlooker would probably believe they'd gotten up to something anyways.

"Good morning," Matt said, his voice still a little scratchy from sleep. Shiro had been awake for a few minutes, not watching him or anything, just

relaxing and wondering if Matt technically counted as his boyfriend, already.

"Morning," he said, "Did you sleep okay?"

"Hm? Oh, fine," Matt said, stretching, arms over his head, back arching. "Why, did you?"

"Yeah, I just usually snore really loud, so. Sorry if I woke you up."

"Mm-mm. I sleep like a log." Matt relaxed back into the blankets, even more boneless than he'd been before, like he was about to melt straight into the sheets. "Got one of those old-timey alarm clocks that's loud enough to wake up the neighbors, and everything."

"That's kind of perfect," Shiro said. He wasn't sure if Matt heard, because he looked like he was gonna fall back asleep.

Shiro decided he'd have to see if kisses woke Matt as well as his alarm did.

**Author's Note:**

Visit me on tumblr @luddlestons for just so much more shatt content, seriously, so much.